

**Transcript of Illinois Farm Bill Forum With Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns and
Moderators Cyndi Young of Brownfield Network and Mike Adams of Agritalk,
Farm Progress Show in Decatur, Illinois, on September 1, 2005**

MR. PHILIP NELSON: Good afternoon, Mr. Secretary, and welcome to the Land of Lincoln. I'm Philip Nelson, president of the Illinois Farm Bureau. For the last year and a half Illinois Farm Bureau has been meeting to put forward some recommendations on our Farm Policy Task Force. You know, a recipe it seems for farm programs in the past is, Keep stirring the same old stew; a little bit of paid diversion here, a little bit of LDP there, and mix it with conservation practices, and hopefully it tastes good.

I can tell you, Illinois Farm Bureau leaders have looked and been creative in putting forward some recommendations that we think are necessary as we write a new Farm Bill.

First and foremost, we believe that we need to enhance the crop insurance and risk management programs. Illinois farmers know full and well what we are experiencing this year; even with crop insurance it doesn't protect the farmer to the fullest degree necessary.

Secondly, we'd like to make sure that we implement the conservation practices that were put out in the 2002 Farm Bill. Farmers in Illinois do like the conservation measures that we're presently operating under.

Thirdly, we feel we need to focus on rural development in this state and in this country. Improving our infrastructure as well as our communications technology is a must to revitalize rural America.

Fourthly, we believe in free trade, fair trade and more trade. Mr. Secretary, you know as well as anyone, almost 3 billion people in our world today make less than \$2 a day. We need to have access to providing our commodities to those people and utilizing that trade.

Last but not least, we need to have regulatory framework reform in this country. We compete on the global stage, and it's very important that we don't hinder agriculture production because of some of the onerous regulations that are coming down the pike.

Those are the five common themes that we put forward, and we'd like to provide you further details on each and every one of them as we write the upcoming Farm Bill. You know, your predecessor Earl Butz once said that if we're going to be successful in production agriculture, we need to start acting more like thermostats which control our environment rather than thermometers which react to it. I believe in those words as we write a new Farm Bill. Thank you.